

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 VIENTI 04578 230649 Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /026 W  
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P R 230555 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4690

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

USDEL JEC PARIS

S E C R E T VIENTIANE 4578

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, MOPS, PFOR, LA

SUBJECT: LAO PROTOCOL NEGOTIATIONS: IMPASSE IN NEGOTIATIONS

OVER STATIONING OF LPF BATTALIONS ON OUTSKIRTS OF  
VIENTIANE AND LUANG PRABANG

REF: VIENTIANE 4515

BEGIN SUMMARY: RLG'S REFUSAL TO ACCEPT LPF DEMANDS TO STATION  
PATHET LAO BATTALIONS OUTSIDE VIENTIANE AND LUANG PRABANG TO PRO-  
VIDE SECURITY FOR THE LPF MINISTERS AFTER PGNU FORMED HAS CAUSED  
IMPASSE IN NEGOTIATIONS. PHOUMI HAS THREATENED TO RETURN TO SAM  
NEUA UNLESS RLG ACCEDES TO LPF DEMAND. END SUMMARY.

1. PHENG PHONGSAVAN EVENING JUNE 22 GAVE ME FOLLOWING SUMMARY OF  
RECENT EVENTS: SOUVANNA MET WITH LAO ARMY GENERAL STAFF AND KEY  
REGIONAL COMMANDERS ON 21 JUNE REGARDING THEIR OBJECTIONS TO STAT-  
IONING OF PATHET LAO TROOPS NEAR VIENTIANE AND LUANG PRABANG. AFTER  
HEARING STRONG OBJECTIONS TO THE PATHET LAO PROPOSAL BY ALL BUT TWO  
GENERALS, SOUVANNA AGREED THAT HE WOULD REJECT THE COMMUNIST  
DEMAND.

MEETING WAS BUSINESSLIKE AND LESS OF A CONTRONTATION THAN JUNE  
20 CABINET MEETING.

2. FAR GENERALS POINTED OUT THAT ACQUIESCING IN STATIONING OF LPF  
BATTALIONS IN LUANG PRABANG AND VIENTIANE WOULD BE MAJOR  
PSYCHOLOGI-

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PAGE 02 VIENTI 04578 230649 Z

CAL DEFEAT FOR RLG. IN THE EYES OF THE PUBLIC, IT WOULD BE INTERPRETED AS LPF CONQUEST OF CAPITALS, SOMETHING LPF DID NOT ACHIEVE AFTER 20 YEARS OF WAR. IF SECURITY FOR LPF MINISTERS WAS OBJECTIVE OF LPF DEMAND, THEN LPF SHOULD TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION SERIOUS RLG OFFERS SUCH AS:

- A. LARGE ICC FORCE MADE UP PRIMARILY OF INDIANS;
- B. LARGE JOINT POLICE FORCE IN TWO CITIES AND INCREASING THE SIZE OF THE LPF DETACHMENT GUARDING LPF COMPOUND;
- C. STATIONING OF NEUTRALIST FORCES NAMED BY BOTH SIDES NEAR TWO CITIES.

3. ON JUNE 22 PHENG PHONGSAVAN INFORMED PHOUMI VONGVICHIT OF PRIMIN' S DECISION NOT TO ACCEDE TO LPF DEMAND TO STATION LPF TROOPS ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE TWO CITIES. PHOUMI ALLEGEDLY REPLIED THAT UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES NEGOTIATIONS ARE AT AN IMPASSE AND THERE WAS NO FURTHER NEED FOR HIM TO REMAIN IN VIENTIANE. PHENG SUGGESTED THAT HE SEE PRIMIN ON JUNE 23 AND PHOUMI HAS APPOINTMENT THIS MORNING WITH SOUVANNA.

4. PHENG WAS VERY DEPRESSED BY PHOUMI' S INTRANSIGENCE, ACCUSING HIM, IN HIS CONVERSATION WITH ME, OF REFUSING TO COMPROMISE ON KEY ISSUES AND MERELY PRESENTING THE RLG WITH ONE ULTIMATUM AFTER ANOTHER. PHENG SAID THAT AT JUNE 22 MEETING, AT WHICH HE INFORMED PHOUMI OF RLG' S STANCE RE LPF DEMAND FOR STATIONING TROOPS, HE ALSO SOUNDED OUT PHOUMI ON OTHER MILITARY SUBJECTS. ON EACH ONE OF THEM, SUCH AS NUMBER AND POSITIONS OF DEMARKATION STAKES, ROLE OF ICC, DELINEATION OF AREA UNDER CONTROL OF RESPECTIVE ADMINISTRATIONS, ETC., PHOUMI INSISTED THAT HIS VERSION WAS THE ONLY " CORRECT POSITION" AND THAT RLG HAD TO ACCEPT IT. THROWING UP HIS HANDS INTO THE AIR, PHENG SAID TO ME THAT UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES NEGOTIATIONS ARE A SHAM.

5. PHENG TOLD ME THAT HE WILL INFORM HEADS OF THE RLG MILITARY AND POLITICAL SUBCOMMISSIONS TODAY OF STATUS OF HIS TALKS WITH PHOUMI (I. E. GENERAL BOUNTHIENG AND NGON SANANIKONE). PHENG STRESSED TO ME AGAIN WILLINGNESS OF RLG TO ENTERTAIN COMPROMISES BUT THAT LPF MUST ALSO BE WILLING TO MAKE CONCESSIONS IF NEGOTIATIONS ARE TO SUCCEED.

6. WHEN I SAW FRENCH AMBASSADOR LAST NIGHT HE TOLD ME THAT HE HAD SEEN

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SECRET

PAGE 03 VIENTI 04578 230649 Z

SOUVANNA AFTER HIS MEETING WITH LAO GENERALS. FRENCH AMBASSADOR

SAID  
THJ SOUVANNA WAS EXTREMELY DISCOURAGED BY IMPASSE. AMBASSADOR  
CARDI  
THOUGHT THAT SOUVANNA'S PRESENTATION MAY BE PURPOSELY GLOOMY SO  
THAT  
FRENCH WILL RAISE WITH SOVIET SECRETARY GENERAL BREZHNEV NEXT WEEK  
IN PARIS LPF'S INTRANSIGENCE IN HOPE THAT RUSSIANS CAN INFLUENCE  
SAM NEUA TO BE MORE ACCOMMODATING. HE IS RECOMMENDING THAT  
POMPIDOU  
MAY WISH TO CONSIDER SUCH ACTION.

7. COMMENT: I CONSIDER RLG DECISION TO STAND UP TO LPF ON THE DEMAND  
FOR STATIONING OF TROOPS OUTSIDE VIENTIANE AND LUANG PRABANG TO BE  
GENERALLY A SALUTARY DEVELOPMENT. IF THE LAO NEGOTIATIONS ARE TO  
PRODUCE A DURABLE DOCUMENT WITH WHICH BOTH THE LEFT AND THE RIGHT  
CAN

LIVE, THEN BOTH THE RLG AND THE LPF MUST BE PREPARED TO MAKE CON-  
CESSIONS. SO FAR, PHOUMI HAS BEEN ACTING AS IF HE CAN "DICTATE" THE  
PROTOCOL. IF RLG GIVES IN WITHOUT A FIGHT ON THE STATIONING OF LPF  
TROOPS, PHOUMI WILL ADOPT SIMILAR PRESSURE TACTICS OF ISSUING ULTI-  
MATUMS ON OTHER POINTS. I ADVISED PHENG TO IDENTIFY THE KEY ISSUES  
ON WHICH HE AND PHOUMI CANNOT AGREE NOW, AND THEN LATER HAVE  
SOUVANNA

OFFER AN OVERALL COMPROMISE, GIVING IN ON SOME ISSUES BUT FORCING  
LPF TO CONCEDE ON OTHERS. PHENG TOLD ME THAT BOTH HE AND SOUVANNA  
FEAR THAT IF LAO NEGOTIATIONS FAIL, NVA AND LPF WOULD RESUME FULL-  
SCALE FIGHTING. RECENT SENATE ACTIONS AND TESTIMONY IN WASHINGTON  
ABOUT U. S. AIR SUPPORT FOR LAOS MAKE BOMBING A LESS CREDIBLE THREAT,  
PHENG SAID. THEREFORE, PHENG THINKS RLG'S BARGAINING POSITION IS  
WEAK. SPEAKING STRICTLY FOR MYSELF, I EXPRESSED DOUBT THAT NVA  
WOULD

MOBILIZE ITS WAR MACHINE IN LAOS AGAINST RLG AGAIN AND PROCEED CON-  
TRARY TO PARIS COMMUNIQUE SPIRIT JUST BECAUSE RLG DOES NOT ACCEDE  
TO  
EVERY LPF NEGOTIATING DEMAND. I THEREFORE THOUGHT THAT PHOUMI'S  
TACTICS MAY INCLUDE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF BLUFF.

8. IF THERE IS ANYTHING DEPARTMENT WANTS ME TO CONVEY TO SOUVANNA  
ON  
STATUS OR TACTICS OF NEGOTIATIONS, I HAVE APPOINTMENT WITH HIM MORN-  
ING OF JUNE 25.  
DEAN

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\*\*\* Current Handling Restrictions \*\*\* EXDIS

\*\*\* Current Classification \*\*\* SECRET

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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Control Number:** n/a  
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**Draft Date:** 23 JUN 1973  
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**DecapTION Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**TAGS:** MOPS, PFOR, PGOV, PINT, LA  
**To:** SECSTATE WASHDC  
SS INFO BANGKOK  
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